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TO : Chief, Language and Area School

DATE: 6 December 1961

FROM : Deputy Chief, Language Training

SUBJECT: Weekly Activities Report

A. SIGNIFICANT ITEMS

None to report.

B. OTHER ACTIVITIES

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1. On 29 November [] travelled to Ann Arbor for the purpose of examining the University of Michigan Language Laboratory which was set up by Chester Laboratories, the developers of the dial system laboratory which was demonstrated in LAS recently. Both examined the laboratory in some detail, listening to tapes and examining the central equipment, after which they split up and [] continued to examine the laboratory equipment with the aid of the Acting Director of the laboratory while [] talked with Dr. Rand Morton, the Director of the Institute of Research in the Behavioral Sciences, about the programing of language material which is being undertaken by the Institute under the auspices of the National Defense Education Act. The conversations and demonstrations continued for most of the day on Thursday. The results of the investigations are as follows:

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a. Although the idea for the dial system laboratory originated at the University of Michigan, the research and development work on the equipment is not yet by any means concluded, in [] opinion, and there are many more bugs to be ironed out of the system. The quality of the reproduction of sound is still in the fair-to-poor range. It is to be expected that these difficulties will be ironed out in the course of time.

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b. The central equipment for the system is highly complex and sensitive to temperature, humidity and dust conditions, requiring special housing.

c. From discussions with Dr. Morton, the fact emerged that the dial system equipment was designed for maximum effectiveness with the use of programing material of the sort which is being developed by the Institute for Research in the Behavioral Sciences. The equipment is far less

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efficient in the other application made of it at the University of Michigan, namely the support of classes. It is primarily designed for use by individual students working at their own speed with programed auto-instructional materials.

Our present laboratory equipment is thoroughly sound and will not need replacement in the immediate future. It is perhaps the best equipment to use in our present mode of operation in support of regular classes. Hence, we recommend that our present equipment from "I" Building be installed in the new building in a way which will make possible the phasing in of dial system equipment at such time and in such quantity as the use of programed materials will dictate.

Perhaps the most important feature of the trip to the University of Michigan was the opportunity to see the work which is being done on programed language training materials. These will become available progressively within the next year and will be very important in the field of programed language materials.

We further propose to purchase 2 or 3 individual machines of the type applicable to the dial system laboratory for immediate experimental applications looking toward the eventual purchase within approximately a year of a small dial system unit. Further dial system equipment can be added as replacements for present equipment in economical modules as increasing use of programed materials becomes feasible. These purchases can be financed as normal replacement of laboratory equipment.

2. The following is an excerpt from a letter received from the wife of an Arabic student who was herself a student in a "wives' class" in Arabic:

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"...The [] supplies a man to show you around--beware of them--I became suspicious of our indigenous aide when all of the apartments seemed to be falling in the same price range...just within or just above our allowance. Having thought I heard a concierge say, in Arabic, [] I was surprised to hear him say "I'll get it for you for [] Later in the day my husband went back alone and followed some [] on a tour of the apartment and found it was [] So...I speak a little, but it was enough."

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3. FDD has sent a fourth student for the full-time Basic Chinese class. We are putting him into the class which has been running a week rather than making him wait for the next running of the class. Any extra coaching he needs to catch up with the

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other three students in the class will be provided. This class shows every sign of being a highly interesting and successful one.

4. A special Basic RSW Rumanian course is being set up to meet a requirement for two people from FDD. The course is scheduled to begin 8 January, meeting 2 hours a day, 3 days a week, and will last 20 weeks. There is a possibility that an additional person will be joining this class from FDD.

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5. [] Chief of BU (Russian Division), FDD, inquired regarding training at FDD headquarters (1717 "H" Street) for two groups, one of these an advanced spoken Russian, the other an advanced Russian translation class. However, our reply was negative, since [] decided that we would have to follow our usual policy of insisting that instruction be conducted at Arlington Towers. According to [] these classes will then be taught by some of their own native speakers. Although a certain amount of "wildcat" language teaching is done by various Agency components, FDD has in recent times relied more for its training on our facilities than was the case in the past. These independent teaching operations are often poorly conceived and performed, without genuine knowledge of technical instructional problems, and, from LAS' point of view, should be discouraged.

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LAS is now carrying on instruction in almost all of the major East European languages, much on a daytime, tutorial basis under the direction of the Head of the Slavic Department, and with native speakers doing much of the teaching. The languages represented are Russian, Polish, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, Hungarian, as well as Albanian in guided self-study. To our knowledge, this is the broadest East European program under Government auspices, except for the Army Language School, and more comprehensive than that offered by most large universities. One request for Czech instruction remains unsatisfied to date because of the difficulty of finding an instructor.

6. During the past week forty-three written proficiency tests were given in Chinese, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Slovene and Yiddish. Twenty of the candidates were from DD/P and twenty-three from other components.

Fourteen oral proficiency tests were given during the past week in Danish, French, German, Greek and Thai. Eight of the candidates were from DD/P and six from other components.

Sixteen Language Award certificates were forwarded to the Registrar this past week.

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